

William and Rebecca Bones House
On private road .3 mile south of
White Horse Road (LR 15134),
approximately 1.5 miles northeast
of Devault
Devault Vicinity (Charlestown Township)
Chester County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1189

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. PA-1189

WILLIAM AND REBECCA BONES HOUSE

Location: On private road .3 mile south of White Horse Road (LR 15134), approximately 1.5 miles northeast of Devault, Devault Vicinity (Charlestown Township), Chester County, Pennsylvania.

Present Owner: Estate of Harry K. Ott, c/o Mr. Ray H. Ott, Box 262, White Horse Road, RD 1, Malvern, Pennsylvania.

Present Use: Vacant.

Statement of Significance: Because its rural surroundings and outbuildings remain, this early 19th century stone bank house looks today much as it did originally.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Date stone in east gable has the following inscription: "W&RB [standing for William and Rebecca Bones] AD 1810"
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: James Parker sold the tract in 1786 to George Wersler, who died in 1832, leaving it to his daughter Rebecca, widow of William Bones. Her heirs sold in 1852 to Samuel Pennypacker, who sold in 1858 to John McConaghy, who sold in 1864 to Henry Detwiler, who sold in 1871 to Joseph Jacobs, who sold in 1873 to Abraham B. Shunk, who sold in 1881 to Dr. Jacob Rickabaugh, who sold in 1884 to Robert Kirkner, who sold back in 1896 to Dr. Rickabaugh, whose heirs sold in 1910 to Paul V. Mace, who sold in 1929 to Frank T. Byrne, who sold in 1945 to Harry K. Ott. Presently it is owned by the estate of Harry K. Ott.
4. Alterations and additions: The roof and cornice on the house were replaced in 1958; otherwise there have been no significant changes.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The house was built on land belonging to George Wersler, the father of Rebecca Bones. In 1826 George Wersler made his will and left to his daughter Rebecca, widow of William Bones, "the place where she now lives."

C. Bibliography:

Clippings and manuscript files in the Chester County Historical Society under the heading: "Charlestown Township: Lands" and also "Wersler Family."

Wills and deeds in the Chester County Court House, West Chester, Pennsylvania.

D. Supplemental Material:

1. American Republican, West Chester, Pennsylvania, October 9, 1855:

"PRIVATE SALE.--The subscriber offers at Private Sale, his valuable Farm, situate in Charlestown township, Chester county, about 2 miles from the Chester Valley Railroad, bounded west by the White Horse road, John G. Wersler and others, containing about 100 acres of land, conveniently divided into fields, in a high state of cultivation, an excellent vein of Copper and Lead are on the property, well watered. The improvements consist of a Large STONE HOUSE and barn, large stone wagon house, spring house, over a never failing spring. Every facility for dairying. There is about 15 Acres of heavy Timbered Woodland of a superior quality. Terms easy. For further particulars apply to H. BUCKWATER, Esq., West Chester, or call to the subscriber, on the premises.

"SAMUEL PENNYPACKER"

2. American Republican, West Chester, Pennsylvania, November 3, 1857:

"PUBLIC SALE.--Will be sold at Public Sale, on the 24th and 25th days of November, 1857, at 2 o'clock, on said days, a VALUABLE FARM, situated in Charlestown township, Chester county, bounded on the White Horse Road, 1 1/2 miles north east of Cedar Hollow, adjoining lands of John G. Wersler, Charles M. Wheatly and others, containing about 100 ACRES.

"The Improvements are a large STONE HOUSE, 24 by 34 feet, 2 rooms, KITCHEN and cellar upon the first floor, large hall and 2 rooms on the second floor, 3 rooms and entry on the third floor, 2 rooms in the loft, piazza fronting the whole building; a large Stone BARN and Overshot, Granaries, threshing-floor and every convenience desirable for a Farm; large Stone Wagon House, 34 by 20 feet, doors and Corn Cribs overhead; large Stone Spring House, 2 stories high near the Dwelling, 30 by 14 feet, with 2 rooms overhead, Wash house a never failing spring which cannot be surpassed in the country, Hog-house, Wood-sheds. APPLE

ORCHARD, about 16 or 18 Acres of WOODLAND of heavy Timber. The Farm is divided in to 10 fields of convenient size, water in every field, there are a number of fine springs on the property, and a stream of water passes through the same. This Farm is of an excellent quality of soil, in a high state of cultivation, it has been well limed, and set with grass, a splendid Dairy Farm.

"Purchasers would do well to view this property before purchasing elsewhere, as it has advantages rarely met with, and the subscriber is determined to sell positive. Any person wishing to view the same by the subscriber, living upon the premises; the purchaser can have possession of the property in 2 weeks from sale if desired.

"At the same time and place, all his STOCK and FARMING UTENSILS--2 Good Farming HORSES, 1 Mare, gentle in harness, 6 COWS, Bull and Heifer, 7 fat HOGS, 5 splendid SHOATS, lot of Fowls. FARMING UTENSILS, viz:--Two narrow wheeled Wagons, 1 two horse and 1 four horse Wagon, Cart, Dearborn, Harrows, Ploughs, Cutting-Box, wagon and Plough Gears, Dearborn Harness, Hay Ladders, 15 or 20 tons of Timothy and Clover Hay, Corn Fodder, Oats and Wheat Straw, and Rye Battons, about 400 bushels of Oats, 200 of Corn, Rye and Buckwheat by the bushel, Potatoes, Apples, Cabbage, half bushel Sugar Corn Seed, by the bushel. DAIRY FIXTURES--2 Churns, Tin Pans and Pots, Buckets, &c. Lot of Posts and Wood by the cord. HOUSEHOLD GOODS such as Beds and Bedding, Bedsteads, lot of woolen and rag Carpet, home made Blankets, Coverlids, Tables, Chairs, Looking Glasses, English Clock, Dough Trough, Corner Cupboard, Kitchen Furniture, 3 Stoves, one a Cook and two wood stoves, Copper Kettle of about 28 gallons, small Brass Kettle, Pots, Pans, Knives, Forks Plates, Tubs, Buckets, about 13 acres of Wheat, and 1 1/2 acres of Rye in the ground.

"Conditions made known on the day of sale by

"SAMUEL PENNYPACKER.

"Joseph G. King, Auctioneer."

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

At the time this house was visited in 1975 the condition of the interior was so deteriorated that only one room on the first floor could be entered. The following description was prepared as a result of that visit and notes and photographs made in 1958.

1. Architectural character: This stone bank house, built into the side of a hill, stands as it was originally built in the early 19th century.
 2. Condition of fabric: Poor.
- B. Description of Exterior:
1. Over-all dimensions: House is 25' (three-bays) by 34'. It is three-and-a-half stories high.
 2. Foundations: Stone.
 3. Wall construction, finish and color: Random rubble.
 4. Porches, stoops, bulkheads: On the south elevation of the house there is a fallen porch which had a shed roof. Under the porch is a stone retaining wall with space for storing wood.
 5. Chimneys: One brick inside end chimney, probably original, located above the west gable.
 6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: All the doors are boarded over. On the south elevation there are two doors at the basement level of the porch. On the northwest corner of the north elevation there is a door leading into the first floor.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Large windows on the north and south facades have six-over-six light, double-hung wooden sash. On the east and west elevations there are randomly spaced windows of two-over-two and two-over-four lights. Most of the windows are boarded over; there are no shutters.
 7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: The roof, which was replaced in 1958, is steeply pitched with wooden shingles. The ridge runs east to west.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Both were replaced in 1958.
- C. Description of Interior:
1. Floor plans:
 - a. Basement: Basement kitchen is on ground level and is

entered from south; it has a large cooking fireplace and a room back of it with a corner fireplace. A stairway is in the northeast corner.

- b. First floor: The first floor has two rooms on the west, with fireplaces and closets in the west wall, and a small room to the southeast at the end of the hall.
 - c. Second floor: The plan is similar to the first floor but there are no fireplaces and the closets are in the west wall.
 - d. Attic: It has a ceilinged room in the northwest corner.
- 2. Stairways: One stairway with simple wooden handrail and square balusters in northeast corner of house.
 - 3. Flooring: Original wide board flooring. On the first floor much has fallen in.
 - 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Paint over plaster. First floor and northwest room have plaster ceilings; basement and second floor have beamed ceilings.
 - 5. Doorways and doors: Door to living room on the first floor is six-paneled rectangular door. The door visible in photograph taken in 1958 is similar. All appear to be original.
 - 6. Special decorative features, trim, cabinet work: Two corner fireplaces with wooden mantels.
 - 7. Hardware: Porcelain doorknobs on interior doors of first floor.
 - 8. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Lighting: Electricity was installed in late 1950's.
 - b. Heating: Back-to-back corner fireplaces in two rooms on first floor which share the chimney on west wall. Two fireplaces in basement, one a large kitchen fireplace, the other located in a small room. All four fireplaces have been bricked over.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: House faces south on the slope of a hill with a fine view across a valley.
- 2. Historic landscape design: None. House is surrounded by meadows and farm land.

3. Outbuildings:

- a. Spring house: Immediately south of the house and below it is a two-story stone spring house, 34' (two bays) by 14'. On the first floor, entered into from the south, is a room with a dirt floor and a large cooking fireplace; adjoining it is the spring room which has cooling shelves on the south wall below the windows. The second floor is one large room, entered into from the north; above it is an attic.
- b. Barn: A large stone barn is located to the east of the house. The date stone in the west gable shows that it was built in 1810. In 1958 the roof of the barn caved in due to a heavy snow. When the barn was rebuilt in 1962, the interior was made into one large room, the floor reinforced with concrete and the exterior walls rebuilt with the original stones. Also at that time the owner Harry K. Ott added his initials and the year 1962 to the original date stone.

Prepared by Bart Anderson
Curator
Chester County Historical
Society
August 1958
and
Marion Morton
December 1975

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as part of a cooperative survey of 100 Chester County buildings conducted by the Historic American Buildings Survey and the Chester County Historical Society between 1958 and 1962. This was the first large-scale project undertaken after the reinstitution of HABS in 1957, and it established the pattern of cooperation with state and local preservation groups which has characterized the HABS program in recent years. Written data was prepared by Bart Anderson, Curator of the Chester County Historical Society, with the assistance of Jim Sorber and others. HABS hired local professional photographer Ned Goode to take the documentary photographs. The written material was edited and expanded in 1975 by Marion Morton working under contract with HABS.